

Roena Frank, an extraordinary woman from my district who has devoted her life to helping the citizens of her community. Roena, who hails from Montrose, Colorado, has dedicated the past thirty years to a career in nursing, and volunteers much of her time working with local charitable organizations. Her work serves as a valuable model of public service to us all, and I would like to ask my colleagues to please join me in recognizing her tremendous achievements before this body of Congress and this nation today.

Raising four kids as a single mother, Roena entered the nursing field in order to earn a living for her family. She quickly realized the career she had chosen was her true calling in life. Roena currently serves as a part-time nurse in Delta County, and spends her free time volunteering with local organizations such as the local hospice, a Boy Scout troop, and the Magic Circle Theatre. In addition, Roena, along with her husband Jim, have been very active with the Montrose Christian Church where they have participated in mission trips to Mexico and Chile.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to rise before this body of Congress and this nation and pay tribute to the contributions of Roena Frank to her community and state. Throughout three decades of civic and public service, Roena has demonstrated an ardent devotion to her nursing career and charitable work. I would like to thank her today for all the work she has done for her Montrose community and the State of Colorado.

TRIBUTE TO BLAIR CROSS

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 9, 2004

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the life of a dear friend and a great American. Blair Cross was a loving family man, a patriotic veteran, and a dedicated activist.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to work closely with Blair and witnessed his tireless advocacy on behalf of Korean War veterans across the country. Specifically, Blair and I have been working on legislation that would grant the Korean War Veterans Association a Federal Charter, enabling the Association to expand its mission and further its charitable and benevolent causes.

Blair was the Korean War Veterans Association's top advocate for this issue, and I am grateful for his activism, and the activism he encouraged among his fellow Korean War veterans.

Mr. Cross's distinguished service did not go unnoticed. The Joint Veterans Committee of Maryland selected Blair to receive the honor of Veteran of the Year and he was to be recognized this April. Blair was chosen to receive this award from over 10,000 veterans throughout the State.

Mr. Cross also helped in founding the Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training. The Baltimore homeless shelter has aided thousands of veterans over the years.

The community, the State, and the country have incurred a tremendous loss with Blair's passing. His advocacy and leadership on behalf of veterans in our State will long be re-

membered and I send my deepest sympathies to his wife Jane, daughter Sharon and Blair's family and friends.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 9, 2004

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, March 4, 2004 I was unavoidably detained and was absent from the House floor while votes took place. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on the consideration of H.R. 3752, the Commercial Space Launch Amendments Act of 2004, as well as "aye" on the consideration of H. Res. 412, and H. Res. 56. I ask that these comments be submitted for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO FRANK KOENIG

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 9, 2004

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honor the philanthropic spirit of Frank Koenig of Montrose, Colorado. Frank responded to a call to community service by founding the Sharing Ministries food bank in Montrose eight years ago. The thriving state of the food bank today is a testament to Frank's tireless efforts, but also to his faith that God will provide and that others will give. Sharing Ministries relies on the contribution of some eighty volunteers, as well as the donations of local food distributors and farmers.

In 1996, Frank Koenig, an ordained Baptist minister and World War II Navy veteran, felt a calling to serve the people of his Montrose community through the establishment of a food bank. He had very little money when he began Sharing Ministries, and was often met with resistance in his efforts to get the charity started. Frank was undeterred and he reached an agreement to lease a vacant freight delivery building from the Rio Grande Railroad, where Sharing Ministries began. During its first month, Sharing Ministries distributed ninety-seven boxes of food to the needy in Montrose. Today, thanks to Frank's efforts, the food bank distributes over three thousand boxes per month, serving those in Montrose and the surrounding communities.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to bring the service and compassion of Frank Koenig to the attention of this body of Congress and this nation. Frank has shown that one person's effort can really make a difference in their community. I would like to wish him the best and sincerely thank him for his service to Montrose and the State of Colorado.

SUPPORTING KAZAKHSTAN

HON. PHIL ENGLISH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 9, 2004

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of my colleagues to an Op-

Ed article published in The Washington Times on March 4 authored by Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, one of our consistent allies in the fight against international terrorism.

I had the pleasure to meet President Nazarbayev in December 2001 during his official visit to the United States and ever since I closely follow the development of this country. I know that Kazakhstan has achieved significant progress in implementing political, social and economic reforms during the dozen years of their independence. Recent evaluation by The Economist magazine shows Kazakhstan to be among the five most dynamically developing countries in the world with an annual GDP growth of 10.1 percent.

Of course Kazakhstan faces challenges on its path to true democracy, and a lot remains to be done. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan is well on the road to a free market economy and a functioning democracy. Significantly, as a Muslim-majority country, it is also showing the world how to promote a religiously tolerant, and open, society.

It goes without saying that converting from a communist economy to a free-market system in a little more than a decade is, under any circumstances, a formidable challenge.

In the wake of the September 11 attacks on the United States, President Nazarbayev has been one of the first to support us in the fight against the global evil of international terrorism. During Operation Enduring Freedom, his government gave the United States fly-over and landing rights as America led the fight for freedom and democracy in Afghanistan. Kazakhstan was the first and still the only Central Asian country to contribute troops to the multinational peacekeeping force in Iraq.

I believe it is in our nation's interest to continue to support Kazakhstan, a country whose actions have demonstrated its commitment to global security, nuclear nonproliferation, stability, and tolerance for ethnic and religious minorities. Mr. Speaker, I am confident that in Kazakhstan we have a crucial ally. I ask unanimous consent that this article be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and urge all of my colleagues to read it carefully.

[From The Washington Times, Mar. 4, 2004]

PROGRESS IN KAZAKHSTAN

(By Nursultan Nazarbayev)

There can be few greater challenges than to attempt to complete in little more than a decade a political process that in the West took many decades, if not centuries. But this is what Kazakhstan has been attempting since becoming independent in 1991.

In the United States, markets preceded democracy. In Kazakhstan, however, we have sought to lay the foundations of a market economy, civil society and democracy simultaneously. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, we believed this was the only way to pursue economic growth and raise living standards while maintaining stability. Without all three, there was little realistic expectation that an oil-rich state the size of Western Europe, but with a population smaller than that of Holland, could remain free.

Our actions in the early 1990s, including the decision to remove our arsenal of nuclear weapons inherited from the Soviet Union, laid the foundations of our stability and prosperity. As Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld commented during his visit to my country last week, had Saddam Hussein followed Kazakhstan's example, the war in Iraq